California State University, Los Angeles
Department of Political Science

Master of Public Administration
Graduate Student Handbook

Academic Year
2015-2016

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PREFACE

This handbook describes the MPA program beginning in Fall Quarter 2013. All graduate students admitted into the MPA program beginning in Fall Quarter 2013 and beyond are subject to these requirements.

Students who began this program before Fall Quarter 2013 have the option of remaining in their original program, or adapting their coursework to the new program. Students who wish to continue with their original programs prior to Fall Quarter 2013 will be held to the University Catalog requirements in force in the quarter for which they were accepted into the program.

If you have any questions regarding these changes or your program, please consult the MPA Graduate Advisor or any public administration faculty member. A side-by-side comparison of the 2004-2013 and 2013 and beyond programs is included below in the table.

2004-2013 Components	**Previous Program (2004-2013)**	**Fall 2013+ Components**	**Fall 2013+ program**
Pre-Reqs	460, 462, 281*	**Pre-Reqs**	281*
Skills Core Sequence	578	**Introductory Course**	570 (new course: Public Administration as a Field of Practice)
	579	**Program Core**	571
	580		572
	594		573
Management Core	571		574
	572		579
	573		580
	574		581 (new course: Policy Analysis for Public and Nonprofit Managers)
Electives	A	**Electives**	A
	B		B
	C		C
Capstone	590	**Capstone**	590
Culminating Experience	596 (exit exam)	**Culminating Experience**	596 (exit exam)
Internship	Required	**Internship**	Required
*Indicates a soft pre-requisite			

MISSION STATEMENT AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) Program at California State University, Los Angeles, prepares students for leadership by educating them for professional public and community service within a diverse and dynamic urban environment. In the program, students develop the following leadership capabilities:

- Knowledge about public administration theory, research and practice
- Analytical and critical thinking skills to inform public and community problem-solving and decision-making processes
- An understanding of the ethical basis for public service
- Effective intra-organizational, inter-organizational and public oral and written communication skills
- A respect for and ability to engage the diversity of perspectives and interests involved in local governance

Adopted: May 27, 2015

ACCREDITED BY THE NETWORK OF SCHOOLS OF PUBLIC POLICY, AFFAIRS AND ADMINISTRATION



The MPA program was reaccredited in July 2006. Accreditation is granted by NASPAA only after a rigorous process including a self-study evaluation and site visit from external evaluators. Accreditation is a guarantee of a recognized, high quality, well-run and up-to-date program. For more information, see: http://www.naspaa.org/about_naspaa/naspaa.asp. The 2014-2015 Academic Year will be the CSULA MPA Program's self-study evaluation year for re-accreditation.

CAREERS FOR MPA GRADUATES

Our graduates continue to work in a variety of careers in local, state and federal governments, as well as in non-profit organizations. They are primarily managers, analysts and policy specialists:

- **Managers** implement policies, allocating resources to achieve the objectives of the program and organization.

- **Program managers** administer programs: establishing objectives, stimulating productivity, motivating workers, reporting and evaluating work progress, structuring work, allocating resources, coping with internal and external political pressures, and ensuring that the public interest is reflected in the work of the agency.

- **Staff managers** support the work of program managers, performing such activities as budgeting and financial management, personnel and labor relations, management information systems, organizational analysis, and procurement of supplies and materials.

- **Staff analysts** develop ways to ensure that program objectives are met. They also look at new ways to meet the public's requests for service. A staff analyst must be familiar with research on social, economic, and environmental problems to propose potential courses of action to decision makers. They are the elements of the program usually involved in briefing papers. Staff analysts work in planning and evaluation units or budget divisions in government.

- **Policy specialists**, the counterparts of staff analysts, work in consulting firms, research institutes or non-profit organizations.

Some of the positions recent graduates have held are:

Human Relations Analyst, Los Angeles County
Appraisal Specialist, Assessor's Office, Los Angeles County
Manager, Aquatorium, City of Commerce
Community Residential Services Supervisor, Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center
Assistant Director of Finance, City of Bellflower
Environmental Supervisor, City of Los Angeles
Lieutenant, Special Operations Division, Police Department, City of Pasadena
Senior Investigator, State of California
Manager, Staff Relations, Fire Department, City of Los Angeles

THE MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

Program Introduction

POLS 570 Public Administration as a Field of Practice

Program Core

POLS 571 Intergovernmental Relations
POLS 572 Public Sector Organization and Management
POLS 573 Public Sector Human Resource Management
POLS 574 Public Budgeting and Financial Administration
POLS 579 Public Sector Information and Management and Computing
POLS 580 Data Analysis for Public and Nonprofit Managers
POLS 581 Policy Analysis for Public and Nonprofit Managers

Program Electives

Three graduate electives with advisor approval (one may be taken outside of the MPA program)

Program Capstone

POLS 590 Seminar: Philosophy of Public Service

Comprehensive Examination or Thesis

Internship

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

PROGRAM INTRODUCTION: 4 units (1 course)

POLS 570 Public Administration as a Field of Practice
This course provides an introduction to the study of public administration as a field of practice and serves as a foundation for the MPA program.

PROGRAM CORE COURSES: 28 units (7 courses)

These seven courses may be taken in any order and each is typically offered once a year.

POLS 571 Intergovernmental Relations
Prerequisites: POLS 570 or instructor's permission. An introduction at the graduate level to intergovernmental relations; governmental structure; incentives for different levels of government; relationships between and among local, state and federal governments; competition/conflict; cooperation; and collaborative models of decision making. In addition, the course provides participants the opportunity to use collaborative problem-solving skills to address regional policy challenges.

POLS 572 Public Sector Organization and Management
Prerequisites: POLS 570 or instructor's permission. A study of the most relevant organization and management thinkers and issues. Topics include organization structures and theories of management in the public sector, decision-making, human relations, goal setting, and leadership in government.

POLS 573 Public Sector Human Resource Management
Prerequisites: POLS 570 or instructor's permission. In depth study of personnel and human resource management, providing an opportunity to analyze current issues. Case studies of personnel problems; examination of varying roles of boards, commissions and other legislative bodies; and new frontiers in personnel research and personnel legislation.

POLS 574 Public Budgeting and Financial Management
Prerequisites: POLS 570 or instructor's permission. Concepts and implementation of budgeting and financial administration. Topics include issues and problems in budget authorization, execution and control, including public policy implications.

POLS 579 Public Sector Information Management and Computing
Prerequisites: POLS 570 or instructor's permission. The objective is to cover typical hardware and software applications in the public sector, as well as the strategies and techniques of information resource management and the issues computers raise in privacy, security and computer crime. The organizational implications of computers are a major topic.

POLS 580 Data Analysis for Public and Nonprofit Managers
Prerequisites: POLS 570 or instructor's permission; POLS 281 or equivalent. If you have not had a recent elementary statistics course you should take or sit-in on POLS 281, Sociology 210AB, or another similar course. In this course, you will work on the statistical and other techniques necessary to carry out research. The course covers different methods of conducting research in public and non-profit organizations, issues of measurement in social science research, review of descriptive statistics, introduction to a statistical software package, probability concepts and applications, sampling, inferential statistics and statistical significance, multivariate analysis, and communication of findings.

POLS 581 Policy Analysis for Public and Nonprofit Managers
Prerequisites: POLS 570 or instructor's permission; preferred POLS 580. This course provides an introduction to policy analysis, providing a current assessment of how analysis is used in public and non-profit decision-making, and it provides practical experience with doing applied analysis.

<u>ELECTIVES</u>: 12 units (3 courses)

These should be chosen according to your interests; MPA graduate students may take one 400-level POLS course or one course outside of the program with the MPA Advisor's prior consent.

POLS 565 Seminar: Public Sector Labor Relations
Prerequisites: POLS 570 or instructor's permission. An introduction to collective bargaining and labor negotiations in federal, state and local government with an emphasis on California. Also covered are differences between the public and private sectors, bargaining legislation and impasse resolution.

POLS 567 Seminar: The Third Sector and Non-profit Organizations
Prerequisites: POLS 570 or instructor's permission. Study of the increasingly integrated relationship between government and third-sector service providers; professional management of non-profit organizations in a complex environment; completion of a grant writing project.

POLS 568 Seminar: Community Development Administration
Prerequisites: POLS 570 or instructor's permission. Theory and process of planned development; role of administration in formulating and implementing development goals at all political community levels; planning, strategy, obstacles, assistance, development of competent personnel and institution-building.

POLS 575 Seminar: Administrative Systems in the Pacific Rim
Prerequisites: POLS 570 or instructor's permission. The objective is to broaden the outlook and experience of students, whose main goals and experiences are likely to be at the local government level in Southern California, with the administrative systems and cultures of the nations of the Pacific Rim, many of which have major population centers in Southern California cities and towns. Comparing public administrative systems in selected Pacific Rim nations, this seminar reviews theories in comparative politics and public administration and then introduces students to administrative practice in these countries. Special attention will be given to how and why these countries differ, as well as the consequences of these differences.

POLS 583 Seminar: Health Politics and Policy
Prerequisites: POLS 570 or instructor's permission. Health politics and policy at the national level and in California. Role of Congress, the Executive branch, media, interest groups, and industry. Policy tradeoffs, design, implementation, and evaluation of health policy.

POLS 584 Seminar: Issues in the Metropolitan Area
Prerequisites: POLS 570 or instructor's permission. This seminar surveys the special problems of cities at the turn of the 21st century, focusing on the discovery of characteristics of the ideal community and their use in administration.

POLS 585 Seminar: Regulation, the Environment and California Public Policy
Prerequisites: POLS 570 or instructor's permission. This seminar ties together three crucial topics that public administrators in California need to understand: regulation; environmental problems, particularly the problems of air quality, water quality and toxic waste disposal; and the study of California policy.

POLS 587 Seminar: Aging Politics, Policy, and Administration
Prerequisites: POLS 570 or instructor's permission. Political and policy analysis of retirement, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, disability programs. Discussion of administration and policy alternatives, including privatization.

POLS 591 Seminar: Administrative Theory and Behavior
Prerequisites: POLS 570 or instructor's permission. Analysis of administrative theory and utilization of advances in behavioral research as they apply to studies of administrative process and organization.

POLS 595 Selected Issues in Public Administration
Prerequisites: POLS 570 or instructor's permission. This is a special topics seminar, whose subject matter varies. It may be taken more than once for credit (to a maximum of 8 units).

POLS 598 Graduate Directed Study
Prerequisites: POLS 570. Instructor consent to act as sponsor. Independent study of advanced topics in the field; regular conferences with sponsor. May be repeated twice for a maximum total of 8 units. Students contemplating doing a thesis may use POLS 598 as a course in which they complete their 20-30 page proposal.

CAPSTONE SEMINAR: 4 units (1 course)

POLS 590 Seminar: Philosophy of Public Service
Prerequisites: POLS 570 or instructor's permission. This capstone seminar is designed to tie together the curriculum through the study of different schools of thought concerning public administration and the philosophy of public service, and through applying that study to the field of ethics in public service. This seminar should be one of the last three courses you complete, following advancement to candidacy.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION OR THESIS

The culminating experience of your degree program is writing a comprehensive examination or thesis. The majority of MPA students have chosen the comprehensive examination, since it has been difficult for working professionals to devote sufficient time and commitment to a thesis. Following completion of all coursework and requirements, you may take the comprehensive examination (POLS 596). The thesis option remains available.

INTERNSHIP

You must complete the equivalent of a one-quarter, full-time internship in a public or non-profit organization or an approved field project. You may be able to substitute appropriate professional experience for the internship. To request this waiver, you must complete the Internship Waiver Form and submit it to the MPA Advisor for consideration. There is a link on the MPA webpage to the Internship Waiver Form, and the form is distributed at the MPA New Graduate Student Orientation.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

You may ONLY take the comprehensive examination upon successful completion of ALL your required coursework, if you have maintained a minimum B average in your 12-course program, and if you have no outstanding incomplete grades. During the registration period for the quarter in which you wish to take the examination, you should request a permit from the Graduate Coordinator, and then register for POLS 596 on-line via the G.E.T. registration system. The fee for the examination is currently $10. No late "adds" are allowed, which means you must add the course before the end of the second week of the quarter in which you plan to take the examination. Dates for the exam are posted on the MPA Web site.

The examination is administered on a take-home basis within a specified period. The exam is distributed via e-mail on a Monday morning. You have 48 hours to complete the exam, and submit a hard copy of your response and the signed honor pledge to the Political Science Department office (by noon on Wednesday). The honor pledge upholds the ethical standards of the discipline of public administration and its professional association, the American Society for Public Administration, with this statement:

> The Honor System in the MPA program depends upon adherence of all members of the program to high standards of academic behavior. Acts constituting a violation of the Honor Code include giving assistance in a formal academic exercise without due acknowledgement; plagiarism; the submission of the same work of academic credit more than once without permission; willful falsification of data, information or citation; and the failure to take constructive action in the event of committing or observing a violation or apparent violation.
>
> I certify that I have neither given nor obtained assistance in this formal academic exercise without acknowledgement, that I have not plagiarized, that I am not submitting the same work for academic credit without permission, that I have not willfully falsified data, information, or citation, and that I have not failed to take constructive action in the event of committing or observing a violation or apparent violation of this Honor Code.

If you cannot take the exam once you have registered, you MUST drop the course prior to the exam distribution. Once distributed, you may not drop POLS 596. Prior to distribution, you may withdraw.

Each comprehensive examination paper is graded anonymously by two faculty members. General grading criteria include:

1. Knowledge of and ability to express theories and concepts and apply them.
2. Clarity in argument
3. Adequacy and relevance of facts, references, and data
4. Organization of material in a coherent, logical form
5. Professionalism in presentation

Examination results are distributed at the end of the quarter the examination was taken, usually during final exam week. Questions regarding the examination results should be directed to the MPA Graduate Advisor at the beginning of the next quarter. If you do not pass the exam, you may re-take the exam. The College of Natural and Social Sciences allows only three attempts at the comprehensive examination.

Past exam questions are on electronic reserve at the University Library Web site. Under Course Material on Reserve, type in the course number **POLS 596**. The password is **pols596**. Examples of strong exams are in the Political Science Department Office. Students may review the exams but may not make copies.

MASTER'S THESIS

You may write a Master's Thesis instead of taking the comprehensive examination. To do so you must have better than a 3.5 GPA in your coursework, a Public Administration faculty member willing to supervise the thesis, a proposal deemed acceptable by the faculty, and two other members of the committee acceptable to the MPA Graduate Advisor and the Political Science Department Chair. Students should take caution with a thesis. In our experience, courses often expire under the seven-year rule due to unfinished Master's theses. Sample theses are available in the Department and Library.

Title 5 of California's Education Code requires that theses meet the following standard:

> A thesis is the written product of a systematic study of a significant problem. It identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendations. The finished product evidences originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, and thorough documentation.

Thesis Proposals

A 15- to 25-page proposal is required. Each faculty member on your committee must sign off on the proposal. It should have the following sections:

1. *A statement of the problem and its significance.* What problem will the thesis investigate? How does that problem relate to current problems in the field, to the public administration/public policy literature, etc.? How significant is the problem compared with other problems that might be investigated for these kinds of governments, policies, etc.?

2. *What literature exists on this general problem area?* What has been written about the problem in the last two decades in the public administration or public policy literature? What are the two or three central themes of that literature? What are the gaps in that literature regarding your issue of focus?

3. *What hypotheses will you collect evidence on?* Most theses endeavor to collect evidence concerning some problem, either in a case study or some more systematic gathering of evidence (survey, use of existing Census or survey data, etc.). What are the two or three (or more) hypotheses for which we are collecting evidence? These should relate directly to the literature in the second part of the proposal.

4. *What data or information will be collected as evidence concerning the hypotheses?* What will be the source of the data, and what problems might be expected to arise as a result of the data collection method? What are the weaknesses of this method? The strengths? How will you compensate for the weaknesses? How original is the data?

5. *The Outcome of the Study.* Give us several paragraphs that tell us what you expect to find and why it will be significant. Be sure to explain fully what will be original about the thesis compared to other work.

Usually, the proposal can become with revision the first chapter of the thesis. A thesis is expected to be a well-written, original, piece of work which states a problem, explores how it has been treated in the literature, states one or more hypotheses, indicates the data or information that will be used to confirm/disconfirm the hypotheses, contains one or more chapters which explain the findings of the analysis, and one or more chapters which draw conclusions from the study.

MPA STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At CSULA, students exiting the MPA program are expected to have developed:

- Knowledge about public administration theory, research and practice
- Analytical and critical thinking skills to inform public and community problem-solving and decision-making processes
- An understanding of the ethical basis for public service
- Effective intra-organizational, inter-organizational and public oral and written communication skills
- A respect for and ability to engage the diversity of perspectives and interests involved in local governance

The interrelated nature of the MPA program courses provides students opportunities to develop these knowledge bases and skills in every course; however, the following table indicates the primary courses in which particular student learning outcomes will be emphasized.

MPA Student Learning Outcomes	• Knowledge about PA • Communication skills • Respect for diversity	• Analytical and critical thinking skills • Communication skills	Analytical and critical thinking skills	Understanding of the ethical basis for public service	• Communication skills • Respect for diversity
POLS 570 Foundations	**I**			**I**	**I**
POLS 571 IG Relations	**P**				**P**
POLS 572 Org & Mgmt	**I**				
POLS 573 HRM	**P**			**P**	**I**
POLS 574 Budgeting		**I**	**I**	**P**	**P**
POLS 579 Info and Computing	**P**				
POLS 580 Data Analysis		**P**	**P**	**P**	**P**
POLS 581 Policy Analysis		**A**	**A**	**P**	**P**
POLS 590 Capstone	**A**			**P**	**A**
POLS 596 Comp Exam				**A**	
I = INTRO, P = PRACTICE, A = ASSESS					

STUDYING FOR THE MPA DEGREE

Once you have been accepted into the MPA program, your job is to work your way through the courses, culminating either with the comprehensive examination or thesis. The MPA Graduate Advisor, public administration faculty and the Graduate Coordinator in the department office will assist you as much as we can. But remember – it is your responsibility to ensure that you fulfill all the degree requirements, keep track of the courses you complete, and maintain good standing in the program. If you have any questions or find difficulties in completing your program, you should immediately talk with the MPA Graduate Advisor. The following notes are to help guide you and familiarize you with the most important regulations. For further details, you should consult the University Catalog.

General Obligations and Honor Code

Our program is conducted in the spirit of adult education, which assumes that every individual student bears responsibility for ethical conduct. Your admission into the MPA program assumes as a minimum acceptance of the following Honor Code:

> The Honor System in the MPA program depends upon adherence of all members of the program to high standards of academic behavior. Acts constituting a violation of the Honor Code include giving or obtaining assistance in a formal academic exercise without due acknowledgement; plagiarism, the submission of the same work for academic credit more than once without permission; willful falsification of data, information or citation; and the failure to take constructive action in the event of committing or observing a violation or apparent violation.

You additionally are expected to exercise courtesy to faculty, staff and fellow students; respect the facilities and amenities of the University; and observe common rules regarding classroom behavior, punctuality and timely fulfillment of assignments. Students who contribute actively to classroom discussions, interact with their colleagues, and avail themselves of the multiple opportunities for education offered through their courses and University activities generally gain a good deal more from their degree programs than those who see the degree simply as something to be gotten through as quickly and with as little effort as possible.

Your Program Plan

When accepted by the Department of Political Science into the MPA degree program, you must file a program plan. The program plan lists the courses you need to take to receive the degree. It represents a contract between you and the University, and may only be changed (by addition or substitution of other courses) through approval of the MPA Graduate Advisor and Department Chair.

Your program consists of a minimum of 48-quarter units (12 courses) plus a comprehensive examination or thesis. You must complete your approved program with a grade point average of 3.0 (“B” average) or higher. Courses with grades below a C must be repeated.

The Graduate Coordinator will send your program plan to you, and you should discuss it with the MPA Graduate Advisor and make sure you understand all its requirements. The program plan has to be signed by you, the MPA Graduate Advisor and the Department Chair. It is then sent to the Graduate Division of the Dean’s Office of the College of Natural and Social Sciences for approval.

Remember: You are responsible for ensuring that you fulfill the requirements of your program plan. You should keep a copy, and as you complete each course you should keep track of the quarter you took it and the grade you received. You are welcome to take additional courses; however, only those approved and officially substituted by the MPA Graduate Advisor may be counted toward your program. If changes or substitutions are approved for your program, you should make sure these have been properly recorded in your file and the necessary paperwork completed.

Advancement to Candidacy

After successful completion of 16 units (4 courses) on your official program, it is your responsibility to request that you be "Advanced to Candidacy" by the College of Natural and Social Sciences, Graduate Division, Dean's Office by submitting the Advancement to Candidacy Form (found on the MPA Web site) to the Graduate Coordinator. To advance to candidacy, the following conditions must be met:

- Completion of 16 quarter units of 500-level courses with a cumulative minimum GPA of 3.0
- Passage of the Writing Proficiency Exam/Graduate Writing Record Assessment

Advising

At the beginning of your studies, you should meet with the MPA Graduate Advisor to discuss your program plan. Although the program is fairly straightforward, you should periodically check with the MPA Graduate Advisor or a public administration faculty member to see that you are on the right track. If you want to change your program, substitute a course or add a course not on your program, you should see the MPA Graduate Advisor to gain approval and ensure an official change is made. MPA faculty office hours are posted on the Political Science Web site and outside the Department office. You may sign up for an appointment in person (office hours sign-in sheets are posted outside faculty office doors), or via telephone or e-mail. You should note that there are no faculty office hours between quarters, during final examination weeks or during the summer quarter when faculty are off-duty.

Remember: It is solely your responsibility to plan your program so that you complete your degree efficiently and comfortably. You should make sure that you consult the MPA Graduate Advisor regularly to ensure you are meeting all requirements.

Graduate Writing Proficiency Requirement

All graduate students must take the Graduate Writing Proficiency Examination (UNIV 400), which is offered each quarter, by the end of your second quarter in residence. Recent graduates from the CSU (and some other colleges) will have taken the exam as undergraduates and do not need to repeat the process as their transcripts will indicate that the exam has been passed.

Internships

The MPA program requires an internship. You must complete the equivalent of a one quarter full-time internship in public administration, a non-profit organization or an approved field project. Appropriate professional experience may be substituted for an internship. Most students can use their professional experience to fulfill this requirement. To qualify, experience must be professional and/or administrative in nature as opposed to a clerical-level position. You can request an internship waiver by completing the MPA Internship Waiver Form and submitting it to the MPA Graduate Advisor for consideration.

Registration for Courses

Your registration dates and deadlines are indicated in your personal G.E.T Account (NOTE: registration typically occurs around Week 5 of the quarter preceding the quarter you are registering. The University requires that you pay the registration fees prior to registering). Two MPA courses require permission to register: POLS 570 (all newly admitted MPA grad students are given a permit and must register for this course in the first quarter of attendance) and POLS 596, the exit exam. If you register for the Capstone Course (POLS 590) prior to completing at least nine courses in the MPA program, you will be dropped from that course during the pre-registration period. You may not register for more than two 500-level courses, which constitute a full-time graduate course load.

Incomplete Grades

Students who do not complete the work for a particular course may be granted an "incomplete" grade with the instructor's permission. Students have up to but no longer than ONE calendar year to make up the incomplete regardless of breaks in attendance, a leave of absence, etc. The official policy states that the single year may be extended prior to the expiration of the one year period by the College Graduate Dean, "for contingencies such as, but not limited to, military service and health problems or an incapacitating nature verified by a physician's statement."

Incomplete grades that are not made up become graded IC (Incomplete Charged) and are factored into the overall GPA as a grade of "F."

Seven-Year Rule

You have seven years to finish your degree once you start taking 500-level courses on your program. Courses at CSULA expire seven years after they are taken, and they must be re-taken for them to count toward your degree. The College allows three courses to be petitioned for renewal, but students may only petition for revalidation one time. Needless to say, re-taking courses involves considerable inconvenience and cost, and the whole procedure has to be agreed upon by the College Graduate Studies Sub-Committee, which in the past has required an explanation in person as to why you did not complete the coursework within the normal timeframe.

Speaking practically, the "seven-year rule" means that the University's expectation is that you will work steadily on your program once you commence. An extended leave of absence for whatever reason may involve re-taking courses because of their expiration or may result in your not being able to complete the requirements for a Master's degree.

Leave of Absence

If you intend to interrupt attendance for more than two quarters in any successive four quarters, you must file an application for Academic Leave. Granting Academic Leave is routine, but if you do not file for a Leave of Absence, and you do not attend the University for more than two quarters in any four, you will need to reapply for admission. If you are readmitted, you will be subject to the catalog requirements in force (including any new requirements) when you return to your studies.

Adding a Course After the Quarter Has Begun

Generally speaking, you can add a course with the instructor's consent for the first week of the quarter if the course is not fully enrolled. Since quarters have only 10 weeks of instruction plus a week for final exams, adding a course after the first week is NOT recommended unless there are special circumstances.

Dropping Courses After the Quarter Has Begun

The policy on dropping or withdrawing from courses is one of the areas where CSULA is very different from other universities and causes more problems for students than most other areas of policy.

First, you get a free drop during the registration period BEFORE the quarter begins or during the first eight (8) days of the quarter. The means one week ONLY. No signatures are required. You can drop a course via the G.E.T. registration system.

After the first week, you can withdraw from a course with the instructor and Department Chair's signatures, and you will receive a "W" on your grade report. Current policy allows you to accumulate four (4) "W" grades, and you will not be permitted to withdraw from a course once the quarter has started.

After the 7th week, you only can withdraw for "extremely serious and compelling reasons," which usually turn out to be serious and extreme cases of medical problems or changes in work hours. You will need the instructor, Department Chair and Dean's signatures, and you will have to provide outside, written verification of the reasons for the drop.

Collecting signatures during the 7th to 10th weeks in the quarter is difficult, so do not wait until Thursday or Friday and expect that the faculty, Chair and Dean will be available to sign your form. Start early.

Be very careful of these rules! If you do not withdraw properly or wait too long, you will receive a WU for the courses, which stands for "withdrawal unauthorized" and counts on your GPA as a grade of F.

Your GPA

Graduate students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above in the courses on their graduate programs. Anything less is unacceptable, and a student in this position initially is placed on academic probation and then disqualified from further classes if their GPA is not raised to 3.0 within 16 units or two quarters in residence, whichever is later. Courses for graduate students also cannot be renewed (retaken and replaced with a higher grade). Disqualification means that you are no longer allowed to continue in the MPA program.

There is a big difference between graduate students and undergraduates in this respect; if your GPA is below 3.0, you only can take the courses on your program and two additional courses to raise it. You cannot take an unlimited number of courses to raise your GPA. We are limited by University rules to the addition of only two courses to your 12-course program. Obviously, it is better never to arrive at this situation than to have to get out of it.

APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION

University Procedure

The University processes applications for graduation four times a year (Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer). The University commencement ceremony is held only once in the Spring Quarter. Students who wish to have their name printed in the booklet for the Spring ceremony must file by the previous Fall or the Winter, Spring and Summer Quarters of the current academic year. For example, June 2015 graduation candidates would include those who filed for the Fall 2014 and Winter, Spring and Summer 2015.

It is solely the student's responsibility to file for graduation during the filing periods that are "printed" in the quarterly "Schedule of Classes" (go to http://www.calstatela.edu/classschedule to select the quarter you are in, and then click on the "Important Dates" link). The University's Graduation Information and Graduation Application can be found here: http://www.calstatela/edu/graduation.

Completion of the MPA degree is fulfilled by the successful passage of the comprehensive exam or completion of a thesis. MPA candidates must file for the appropriate quarter that they anticipate they will attempt the comprehensive examination.

Note: If you do not pass the exam, you are allowed to repeat it the next time the exam is given. It is the policy of the Graduation Office to roll applicants' graduation applications to the next quarter if they do not complete all the degree requirements by the quarter filed. F or MPA candidates, the consequence is that should you not pass the comps in the Fall, your application would be forwarded to the Winter quarter. The exam is not given in Summer Quarters since no faculty are on duty to grade them.

Department Procedure

Bring your paid Graduation Application to the Political Science Department Office for the Graduate Coordinator to stamp, verify that all requisite information is correct and to record that you have applied for graduation. You must then take the graduation application to the Dean's Office, Graduate Division, College of Natural and Social Science, in the Annenberg Science Building #2. Your application then will be forwarded to the Graduation Office for processing.

SUMMARY CHECKLIST

Once you have received your letter admitting you to both the University and the MPA program, you may begin working toward your degree. This checklist summarizes the process outlined in the Handbook.

1. Attend the MPA New Student Orientation and follow up in Fall Quarter by making an appointment with the MPA Graduate Advisor to discuss your program plan.

2. Take the Writing Proficiency Examination (UNIV 400) within two quarters of starting courses.

3. Discuss with the MPA Graduate Advisor whether you need an internship, or whether it will be waived due to your professional experience. Complete and submit the Internship Waiver Form to the Graduate Coordinator in the Political Science Department. If you need an internship, start planning now.

4. Begin your program with the required introductory course POLS 570 during the first quarter admitted.

5. Continue with your core and elective courses. Consult the two-year MPA planning schedule to see when courses will be offered (this schedule is tentative, but efforts will be made to adhere to it).

6. Registering for two 500-level courses per quarter constitutes a full-time course load. Taking more than two courses is not recommended. Plan to register early to get a place in the courses you wish to take.

7. You need to maintain a B average (3.0) on your 12-course/48 unit program. If you drop below a B, you will be placed on academic probation. If you cannot get up to a B average with the courses left on your program, we can add only two courses to the program to make up for the deficiency.

8. After completing 16 units on your program with a minimum B average and passing the Writing Proficiency Exam, submit the Advancement to Candidacy Form to the Graduate Coordinator.

9. Think about how the MPA courses fit together for you, and look ahead to the comprehensive exit examination and prepare yourself to complete it successfully.

10. After completing all your coursework and other requirements successfully, you may take the comprehensive examination. You need to request a permit from the Graduate Coordinator to register for POLS 596. You register for it as you would for any course, except that this course has a fee of $10. Dates for the examinations are posted at the bottom of the MPSA Web page.

11. Students need to apply for graduation for the quarter in which they take the comprehensive examinations – plan ahead. The application filing periods, which typically are one quarter in advance of the graduating quarter, are published here: http://www.calstatela/edu/graduation. It is the student's responsibility to file by the listed deadline. Please contact the Graduate Coordinator with any questions.

12. If you wish to write a thesis, you should consult with a faculty advisor early in your program, and you should be aware that an acceptable thesis usually takes at least a year and usually more to complete.

13. You should become familiar with the University Catalog sections on the Department and graduate study generally in force when you began study. The College of Natural and Social Sciences' Graduate Studies Office has an "Advisory Check List". The Political Science department website is http://www.calstatela.edu/dept/pol_sci/.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION FACULTY NUCLEUS

Greg Andranovich, Ph.D. (University of California, Riverside, 1984). Professor. Public Administration, Intergovernmental Relations, Policy Analysis, Urban Mega-Events.

Jessica DeShazo, Ph.D. (Northern Arizona University, 2014). Assistant Professor. Public Administration and Public Policy, Public Budgeting, Environmental Policy and Administration.

Chongmyoung Lee, Ph.D. (North Carolina State University, 2014). Assistant Professor. Public and Non-Profit Management, Performance Measurement and Management, Research Methods and Quantitative Analysis, Microeconomics and Public Finance, Organizational Studies.

Ellen Shiau, Ph.D. (University of Southern California, 2012). Assistant Professor. Urban Politics and Public Policy, Civic Engagement, Nonprofit Organizations, GIS Methods and Analysis.

PAST PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION FACULTY AT CSULA

The MPA program at Cal State LA has existed since the 1950s. The contributions of the following MPA faculty, to the evolution of our program (as well as the Department and University) and to the field of public administration, are recognized and appreciated. The timeline of dates of service is provided.

Arthur J. Misner (1955-1983)
Eugene P. Dvorin (1958-1992)
Robert B. Callahan (1960-1983)
Robert H. Simmons (1962-1985)
George Litke (1963-1992)
Vergil Stevens (1963-1985)
J. Theodore Anagnoson (1983-2006)
Byran O. Jackson (1986-1992)
Naomi J. Caiden (1993-2008)
Siegrun Fox Freyss (1996-2013)
Stephen K. Ma (1990-2015)

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